

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-10 are pending in this application after this Amendment. Claims 1 and 5 are independent. Claims 2, 8, and 11 have been cancelled without prejudice of disclaimer to the subject matter included therein. In light of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a) and (b) as being anticipated by *Thacker et al.* (USP 5,267,235); and rejected claims 5, 9, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tsuboi et al.* (USP 5,140,582) in view of *Yamasaki et al.* (USP 5,539,916). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3-4, 6 and 8 include allowable subject matter.

Examiner Interview

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the telephone interview conducted on October 25, 2005. During the interview, Applicants asked the Examiner why he did not consider new claim 11 as added in Applicants' previous Reply. The Examiner indicated that his failure to consider new claim 11 was in error. The Examiner further advised Applicants that claim 11 included allowable subject matter.

Prior Art Rejections

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the elements of claims 2 and 11. As the Examiner has indicated that claim 11 includes allowable subject matter, Applicants submit that claim 1, together with claims dependent thereon are in proper form for allowance.

Additionally, by this amendment, Applicants have amended claim 5 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 8. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5, together with claims dependent thereon, are in proper form for allowance.

These amendments are being made without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance prosecution of the present application.

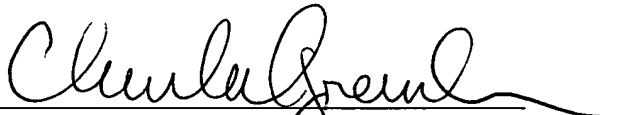
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Charles Gorenstein, #29,271

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicants

c
CG/CMV/mmi
0033-0697P